

Dear Senator Harp,

3/25/11

My name is Alicia Audet and I am a sophomore in the Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience and Technology Program in Woodbury. I live in Bethlehem and I attend this regional agriscience school choice program because it gave me an opportunity to pursue my dreams in animal science. I grew up on a farm with beef cattle, dairy cattle, and pulling oxen. Part of this program is to be involved in events that help prepare us for the future such as Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). For my SAE I work on my family farm in Harwinton, CT, where I work with all the animals, and compete all over New England at Fairs with them. This program gave me a chance to learn new things from my teachers as well as other students. In the future I want to be involved in animal science in large animal studies and ag education. Through out my two years here at Nonnewaug High School I have had opportunities in the Ag program as well as FFA. I am currently on the 2010- 2011 State Livestock Judging Team. Last November my three teammates and myself competed at UConn and won the state level for Livestock Judging and will go on to compete at nationals located in Indianapolis this coming October. This gave me a chance to learn how to judge livestock beyond beef cattle. Being in FFA has extended my leadership experience and has strengthened my confidence and ability to speak in front of a group of people. In the future I would like to own a farm that has quality show beef cattle and pulling oxen. Without this program I would not have the skills that I now obtain. Being in this program it has made it more clear to me that without the growth in agriculture we as a nation will have a bigger economic decrease.

I am writing this letter to encourage you to **please urge the Appropriations Committee to pledge 9 million dollars of the school choice funding increases proposed in the Governor's budget to the state's 19 regional (vo-ag) agriscience programs.**

Our agriscience programs have been drastically underfunded for over 20 years as compared to the magnet schools, charter schools, vocational technical schools and the other school choice funding programs. (Please see attached flyer with details)

This will allow hundreds of more students like me to enroll in these successful programs so they will have the same positive experience I am having now.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Alicia Audet